

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 /049 W

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O 022359Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 9625

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ IMMEDIATE

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1261

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MORG, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAN MILITARY REORGANIZATION

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 1203, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 1222, (C) TEGUCIGALPA 1245

1. FURTHER INFORMATION OBTAINED BY MILGP AND DAO OFFICERS TENDS TO CONFIRM INFORMATION DETAILED REF C PARA 4. LT. COLONELS' GROUP APPARENTLY HAS REMOVED VIRTUALLY ALL ARMY COLONELS FROM SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS. COLONELS REGARDED AS RELATIVELY HONEST AND COMPETENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO NON-COMMAND POSITIONS SUCH AS AMBASSADOR, MILITARY ATTACHE AND CABINET POSITIONS. APPARENTLY ONLY COLONELS PAZ (PUBLIC SECURITY) AND MELGAR WILL HOLD ACTUAL MILITARY COMMAND POSITIONS, AND THE DEGREE OF THE LATTER'S AUTHORITY IS STILL SUBJECT TO QUESTION.

2. PARA 7 REF C SHOULD BE CLARIFIED. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY HAS NO POSITIVE INFORMATION THAT AIR FORCE OFFICERS PARTICIPATED IN MARCH 31 CONFRONTATION WITH LOPEZ, THE AIR FORCE IS FOLLOWING
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THE ARMY MODEL OF PERSONNEL REASSIGNMENT. ACCORDING TO

EMBASSY SOURCES EX-AIR FORCE COMMANDER COL. ENRIQUE SOTO CANO HAS BEEN OFFERED THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT. SOTO CANO'S DEPUTY, COL. MARIO CHINCHILLA HAS BEEN NAMED MINISTER OF DEFENSE. ALL OTHER AIR FORCE COLONELS ARE BEING RETIRED OR OFFERED POSITIONS OUTSIDE THE AIR FORCE. LT. COL. DOMINGO A. ALVAREZ CRUZ HAS BEEN NAMED AIR FORCE COMMANDER. DAO WILL TRANSMIT IRG 841 0099 75 APRIL 3 DETAILING PERSONNEL CHANGES.

3. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE INDICATED THAT THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL INTENDS TO MEET NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES. NAMES MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS THOSE TO GO ARE MINFIN ACOSTA BONILLA, MINECON BENNATON AND MINLAB GUWAMA FONSECA. RECENTLY APPOINTED NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE DIRECTOR (INA) LT. COL. MARIO MALDONADO WILL STAY AND IS APPARENTLY AN INSIDER OF THE LT. COLONELS' GROUP.

4. IN PLACE OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF EACH SERVICE WILL HAVE ITS OWN GENERAL STAFF. THE SWEEPING NATURE OF ARMED FORCES CHANGES IS NOW APPARENT TO EMBASSY AND IMPACT WILL BE FELT THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF THE GOH.

5. PROFOUND NATURE OF THESE CHANGES IS NOT FULLY PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND PRESS REACTION RUNS THE GAMUT FROM CONSIDERING THE EVENTS AS A "MINI GOLPE" TO PASSING THEM OFF AS MERE TECHNICAL REORGANIZATION. ANALYSIS OF LIKELY REACTION BY PRIVATE SECTOR, STUDENT, LABOR AND OTHER GROUPS MUST AWAIT FULLER KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING BY THE PUBLIC. THERE HAVE BEEN NO KNOWN REPORTS OF ANY GROUP PLANNING ACTION, EITHER IN SUPPORT OF OR AGAINST, CURRENT CHANGES. PUBLIC IN GENERAL APPEARS TO BE AWAITING FULLER DISCLOSURE OF EXTENT OF CHANGES.

6 ALTHOUGH AT THIS POINT DISPLACED COLONELS HAVE APPARENTLY ACQUIESCED IN THESE CHANGES WE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LATER REACTION, ALTHOUGH ONLY COL. PAZ OF SECURITY FORCES HAS

COMMAND ACCESS TO TROOPS AND HIS FORCES ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

7. NEARLY ALL LT. COLONELS NEWLY ELEVATED TO SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS OF MILITARY AUTHORITY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN U.S. TRAINING PROGRAMS
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AND ARE CONSIDERED TO BE FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, MEMBERS OF LT. COLONELS' GROUP HAVE CONSISTENTLY SAID THAT THEIR MOTIVATION IS BASED ON A DESIRE TO PURGE THE MILITARY OF CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT SENIOR OFFICERS AND TO PLACE ARMED FORCES ON A MORE PROFESSIONAL EKING.#

CHANGES ANNOUNCED TO DATE TEND TO CONFIRM THEIR STATEMENTS;

THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT IN THE GOH.
EXPECTED CABINET CHANGES MAY PROVIDE SOME CLUES TO NUANCES
IN POLICY SHIFTS.

8. IT IS CLEAR THAT AUTHORITY OF CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ HAS
BEEN CONSIDERABLY DIMINISHED BY THESE CHANGES. HE PERFORCE
HAS HAD TO YIELD TO THE DEMANDS OF THE REFORMIST GROUP,
BUT THE CURRENT CHANGES ARE CERTAIN TO PRODUCE A DEGREE OF
BITTERNESS AMONG AFFECTED OFFICERS, SOME OF WHOM ARE
HIGHLY RESPECTED. WHETHER THIS WILL ADD UP TO ANY
SIGNIFICANT REACTION REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
SANCHEZ

NOTE BY OC/T - # AS RECEIVED.

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